

Bill
Gorkin
Jimmy
Sullivan
H.L.V.

November 18, 1966

Mr. Julius Frensdan
Vice President, UPI
National Press Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Frensdan,

In our society there great dependance on the intellectuals and the press. Both abdicated, totally, when President Kennedy was assassinated. Both since then, perhaps compulsibely seeking to depend on undefensible record, have compounded their failures with dishonesty, viciousness and continuing abdications for which there is now even less excuse.

I gave UPI a copy of "WHITEWASH" May 9, 1966. It was silent. Shortly thereafter, when you were kind enough to see me, I gave you an additional copy, urged you to read it, promised to answer every question you might have to your satisfaction, and offered you the source of everything in it. You were not interested. In addition to what the future will reveal, you also may have put UPI into the position of being scooped on what might have been - and might still be - a UPI exclusive.

With respect to the revelations of the future, in common with most of the press UPI assumes that everything has been said, all that is or will be known has been printed. Those who daily write developing stories should know better. But on the basis of what is now public alone, you have miserably failed your obligations to the kind of society that depends upon you. It was not UPI Jefferson had in mind in choosing the press over government.

If the Pulitzer people start giving prizes for progaganda, Merriman Smith can add to his. One of your subscribers has sent me the advance on his piece for release 11/13 ~~xxxx~~ It is a monumental intellectual dishonesty. The kindest thing I can say of it is that its author is misinformed. Has it not occurred to any of the press that, when it consults sources that have palmed off the biggest lie in our history to the entire world, they have little to lose with another lie to an individual? At what point is the press going to remember its near to sacred function in our country? At what point are the writers, editors and agencies to become disgusted with their pimpery and recapture their integrity and that ~~xxx~~ of our country with it? When will you ask, "Suppose the report is wrong?" When will you make even an honest effort to find out?

Mr. Smith was particularly vicious and dishonest with me. I do not think he read my book. To believe he did would give me an even lower opinion of him and what he has done. However, maybe we can reach a few determinations. You and he can presumably arrange for the facilities of the National Press Club. I'd like to debate Mr. Smith there, on my book, his article, the work of the Commission, or any combination of his choosing. Let us then see who speaks truth, who fairly and honestly reflects the record. Let us learn and let the people know whether an American President can be murdered and a single question within the capacity of men to answer may remain unanswered.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg